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those of a head nurse in a ward of any large civilian hospital, supervision of the general conduct of the ward, under the surgeon in charge of that ward. As her assistants, she has the hospital corps men of varying grades and experience. These have had a preliminary course of three or more months at one of the several Naval Training Schools, but for the teaching of practical nursing procedures, the nurse is responsible. Since it is on these men that the surgeon on the battleship depends for assistance in the care of the sick and wounded sailors, every nurse can readily see her opportunity to send her influence to the front, even though she may not go herself.

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### SOME THINGS BEING DONE FOR THE CONVALESCENT

By MARY H. DuBOSE

*Chief Nurse, U. S. N.*

The most trying time in the life of our patient from the acute stage of his illness until his complete restoration to health and return to duty, is that period dating from his first day out of bed until he is considered strong enough to make his first independent liberty. The influences brought to bear upon our men at this stage of convalescence, have become a matter for earnest consideration and thought on the part of our hospital authorities. The prime business of a military hospital is the rapid restoration of men to active duty. Consequently, any factor which may aid this result, immediately assumes a definitely important aspect. That a man's mental and emotional state may have upon him an actual physiological effect, is a question which has passed beyond the field of speculation. It has become a force to be reckoned with in the care of the sick. Though our personnel does consist so largely of young, high-spirited boys—even they cannot be considered immune from this period of depression, due partly to physical weakness and, to a certain degree, to nostalgia, from which even the strongest of us can hardly hope to escape at such a time.

In the Brooklyn, New York, Hospital, we have met this problem in various ways. To begin, the men are visited twice a week by representatives of certain well-recognized national organizations, who bring them fruit, flowers, magazines and games; in fact, they have introduced a note of personal interest and friendliness, to which the men have responded in like spirit. I have noticed many a reserved, taciturn, or homesick boy fairly expand under this influence. Genuine friendships have been formed, and when the boys are able to get out, they have found a welcome awaiting them in the homes of these warm-hearted, patriotic women, usually, themselves, the wives or mothers of men in the Navy or National Army.

In certain cases where the patient is too far from home to permit spending his sick leave with his family, a visit to some country home near New York has been arranged. While still a patient in the hospital, he is the frequent recipient of theatre, dinner, and auto-ride invitations. Last week, for example, I noticed that the men seemed to be entertained in a most successful fashion. Thirty matinee tickets to one of New York's most popular plays, were sent to us. At 1.15 p. m. a motor bus was at the gate to take the men. After the performance, a dinner was given them at the Y. W. C. A. It was then thought that they would be ready to return to the hospital, but the hostess of the party discovered that seven o'clock was no time of night for a sailor to go home, especially when a number of pretty girls were inviting him to dance, so they stayed over for the party at the Y. W. C. A. that evening, and came home at 11 o'clock, a tired but happy crowd.

The men have not needed, however, to seek diversion beyond the doors of the hospital. We have brought it to them. Every Tuesday evening through the fall and winter months, we have had an entertainment of our own, consisting of community singing, vaudeville, and moving pictures. Our great convalescent surgical ward is an interesting sight on such occasions. The atmosphere is fairly electric. How could it be otherwise, when several hundred gay-spirited, keen-witted American boys are crowded into a flag-hung room, with someone at the piano to dash off the latest rollicking war song and everybody just waiting for the fun to begin?

We have a systematic way of arranging the ward for these affairs. In the center, the beds are pushed back and chairs are placed for ambulant cases, with ample space allowed for the "wheel-chair brigade," as we call them, and on either side are the stretcher cases.

Many interesting people, singers, readers, and vaudeville artists of national fame have appeared from time to time, to give generously of their talent and their art to an audience whose enthusiastic responsiveness but stimulated them to further effort.

I feel that I cannot close this little sketch without referring to one most amusing evening, when the New York Policemen's Glee Club came over to entertain us. Can you imagine the scene! Thirty or forty of "The Finest" massed at the end of the ward, with their great forms and bronzed faces, blue coats and brass buttons, against a background of the colors; and the slim young bluejackets crowded in until they were sitting cross-legged at the very feet of the august guardians of the law; and looking up at them with an expression of almost impish delight.

"Ah," says Jack to himself, "These be topsy turvy times."